

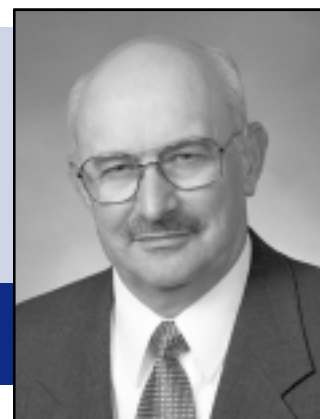


REPRESENTATIVE

**MARY  
SKINNER**

# 2002 14<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT REPORT

## *End of Session Report*



REPRESENTATIVE

**JIM  
CLEMENTS**

### **YOUR 14<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT TEAM**

REPRESENTATIVE  
**MARY SKINNER**

434 John L. O'Brien Bldg.  
P.O. Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
(360) 786-7810  
E-mail:  
skinner\_ma@leg.wa.gov

REPRESENTATIVE  
**JIM CLEMENTS**

410 John L. O'Brien Bldg.  
P.O. Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600  
(360) 786-7856

**TOLL-FREE HOTLINE:**  
1-800-562-6000

*(Interpretive services available  
upon request)*

*Dear friends,*

*We're writing this update to announce the conclusion of the 2002 legislative session. In reality, however, the Legislature didn't conclude its work – it simply quit. Here's what we mean.*

*The to-do list for the 60-day session we recently completed normally would have included simple, "supplemental" adjustments to the state budgets adopted during last year's much longer session.*

*Unfortunately, the state's operating budget was in such sad shape, less than a year after it was adopted, that it needed more than adjustment. A complete rewrite was required. Instead of overhauling the budget in a manner that retained the state's priorities, while protecting taxpayers, the majority party leadership accepted some poor solutions. They were quick-fix exit strategies.*

*We're concerned that the stage has once again been set for huge tax increases, or huge cuts in vital public services. We also wish more had been done to seriously address the fundamental causes of our state's financial woes: Please take a few minutes to read this brief report on how actions taken (or not taken) during the 2002 session could affect you.*

*It is a privilege to continue to serve as your state representatives these past two years. Remember, we are your representatives continuously, not only when the Legislature is in session. Please contact our offices when you desire to share your thoughts on the decisions before us, or if you require assistance in dealing with a state agency. We appreciate hearing from you, because our government operates best when **you** are involved.*

*Sincerely,*

Mary Skinner  
State Representative

Jim Clements  
State Representative

# 14TH DISTRICT

## REP. MARY SKINNER • REP. JIM CLEMENTS

### INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY

The 14<sup>th</sup> District delegation (Sen. Alex Deccio, and Reps. Skinner and Clements) worked as a team to continue the state's investment in the new Higher Ed Center at Yakima Valley Community College, and bring new investment and jobs to our community, through three items in the supplemental capital budget.

We worked to secure \$1.5 million to essentially finish the YVCC higher ed center. The bulk of the construction was approved in the 2001-03 capital budget adopted last year, and we knew this relatively small additional amount would be waiting this year. The supplemental budget also will increase Yakima's draw as a destination for sporting and other events, with \$1.25 million to add seating in the Sundome, and another \$1.25 million to expand softball fields for tournament play.

Last-minute negotiations in the House Appropriations Committee by Reps. Clements and Skinner helped restore \$1 million for rural and local tourism programs to the state operating budget.



*Rep. Jim Clements, an eight-year member of the House Appropriations Committee, pushed for changes in the state budget that would have protected taxpayers.*

### OVERSPENDING CONTINUES IN OLYMPIA

The fundamental flaw in the state budget is that too much is spent on the bureaucracy in Olympia, at the expense of services in the remainder of the state. To cover this overspending, the 2002 supplemental budget relies more than ever on "one-time" dollars to pay for day-to-day operations. This contains \$325 million taken from the state's emergency fund, and \$450 million that will be raised by selling bonds utilizing a large portion (expected to be at least 20 percent, or more than \$1 billion) of Washington's future payments from the national tobacco settlement. We're looking at a loss of 70 cents on each dollar bonded to raise fast money – without ever addressing or solving overspending by and for the state bureaucracy.



This will be the first time Washington has used bonded money to pay day-to-day expenses. It is essentially trading 30 years of payments for an immediate shot of cash that will be gone next year. We find it hard to imagine that the lawmakers who voted for this would take the same approach with their household finances.

We also are disappointed that the Legislature was so eager to essentially carve away the protections created by Initiative 601 in 1993. Now, rather than a vote by two-thirds of legislators, it requires only a simple majority vote to increase your taxes, or tap the state's emergency reserve fund.

Hopefully, the state's economic condition will improve over the remainder of the 2001-03 state budget cycle. That would increase the state's revenues, keep us from returning to Olympia next year to deal with additional cuts to services, and eliminate having to consider tax increases.

### TRANSPORTATION PROPOSAL

The decision of a statewide transportation proposal will be in your hands as voters in November. The plan put forward by the Legislature would raise about \$7.7 billion over 10 years for transportation projects in the Yakima area and throughout the state. Increased taxes to fund the plan include an additional 9 cents a gallon tax on gasoline to be phased in over the next two years.

#### STATEWIDE PROPOSAL



#### Revenue sources

- 9-cent increase in gas tax ..... \$3.039 billion
- Highway bonds ..... \$4.6 billion
- 1% sales tax on vehicle ..... \$1.160 billion
- 30% truck weight fees ..... \$233 million
- Sales tax on construction ..... \$165.2 million
- Debt services and other costs ..... (-\$1.461 billion)

#### How the money will be spent

- Highways ..... \$5.44 billion
- Park-and-ride lots ..... \$80 million
- Freight mobility ..... \$116 million
- Auto ferries and terminals ..... \$595.4 million
- Passenger-only ferries ..... \$92.8 million
- Public transportation ..... \$600 million
- Local transportation assistance ... \$330 million
- Commute trip reduction ..... \$140 million
- Passenger rail ..... \$197 million
- Freight rail ..... \$95 million

# SESSION REPORT

## COALITION, LAWMAKERS PROTECT YAKIMA HEALTH CARE

Last fall, after the House Health Care Committee came to Yakima, we knew budget cuts to health care would severely affect our local area. There are so many health services in Yakima that are mutually dependent. If one of the services is disabled, the others are disproportionately affected. Examples include interpretive services, mental health services, maternal support services, services to children, nursing homes and long-term care.



Following the committee hearings, Mary worked with a number of key people involved in health care within the community with the goal of protecting local health care services. The group eventually formed what is now the Yakima County Health Care Coalition.

In December, prior to Gov. Locke releasing his budget proposal, Mary organized a conference call with the governor and the coalition. They informed the governor how budget cuts would affect our local community.

When the governor released his proposed budget, it contained \$69 million in reduced nursing home funding, \$3 million in assisted living cuts, \$7 million in lost caregiver wage funding, and \$2 million in long-term care cuts.

Mary worked with the coalition to put up an allied front to fight the cuts. Backed with research, paperwork and support materials provided by the coalition, she took those concerns to the budget writers in both the House and Senate. She told them what the impacts would be to nursing homes and hospitals if the proposed cuts were implemented.

With many helping hands, the message was heard. The final Senate budget removed the cuts. Health care services in Yakima were saved.

## LEGISLATURE APPROVES HEALTH CARE BILLS

Rep. Skinner ushered three health care bills through the Legislature during the 2002 session, which were signed into law.

**HB 2588** - Updates information required on prescription labels and streamlines the paperwork process for pharmacists.

**HB 2707** - Clarifies training requirements for long-term care givers and provides more time for implementation of those requirements.

**HB 2428** - Revises the state's conflict of interest law to shorten the waiting period for care professionals who have left the industry and would like to become long-term care ombudsmen.

## YAKIMA CHAMBER PROGRAM HONORED

We were pleased that both the House and Senate took time to adopt resolutions recognizing the innovative program created by the Greater Yakima Chamber of Commerce. The Business Education Partnership Initiative brings students and educators together with businesses in a job shadow, mentor or internship program. More than 2,000 students and teachers have been given the opportunity to work directly with 668 businesses in the Yakima area through this program.

Nearly 60 people from Yakima, including representatives from labor, business, education and government, came to Olympia to accept the resolutions. They also visited with legislative leaders and Lt. Gov. Brad Owen during lunch. We are so very proud that our community has again shown its strength as a leader in Washington state.



*Rep. Mary Skinner reviews documents at a recent meeting of the Yakima County Health Care Coalition at Children's Village.*

# 14TH DISTRICT

## REP. MARY SKINNER • REP. JIM CLEMENTS

### ADDRESSING COMMUNITY, REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE CONCERNS

Rep. Clements worked hard to get a number of bills signed into law.

House Bill 2926 was Rep. Clements' solution to the proposed closure of the Washington State Library, established nearly 150 years ago before Washington achieved statehood. His legislation, developed with help from the director of the Yakima Valley Regional Library, Anne Haley (who also is chair of the state library commission), preserves the library by putting its operation under the Office of the Secretary of State.

This transfer will save at least \$500,000 a year while protecting public and government access to the priceless and staggering volume of records the library manages.

House Bill 2918 lifts the three time-per-week restriction on bingo games. This allows non-profit organizations in our community and around our state to

offer bingo more often, and compete against card rooms and casinos.

House Bill 2663, which expands the list of occupational diseases covered by industrial insurance, will help our firefighters by acknowledging the variety of uncontrolled hazards they face in the line of duty. Between fighting fires at methamphetamine labs and administering first aid to people, firefighters never know what they will be exposed to next.

Rep. Clements' work on behalf of our agricultural industry included the introduction of three bills – now laws – intended to help improve the business climate.

House Bill 2773 requires fruit merchants to submit monthly reports about the imported fruit they receive, pack, and sell. Fruit brought in from outside our country sits side-by-side in the warehouses with our Washington-grown fruit, and competes with it at the point of sale. Knowing which merchants are bringing in foreign fruit, how much is coming in, and how much it's selling for would give Washington growers a better idea of what they're up against.

House Bill 2892 gives apple merchants until Oct. 1 of each year to sell



the previous year's harvest to retailers or wholesalers who would sell those apples as "fresh" to the public.

House Bill 2893, known as the farm equipment dealers act, will help level the field for local dealers in their relationships with national suppliers and manufacturers.

Another of Rep. Clements' ag-related bills was House Bill 2772, intended to give farmers better information about crop insurance so they can make sure potential losses are adequately covered. It didn't pass the Senate, but Jim is working with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and state Department of Agriculture on a task force that will look at modernizing standards for apple crop insurance plans for growers.

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Washington State  
Department of Printing

14TH DISTRICT  
END - OF - SESSION  
REPORT

PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

REPRESENTATIVES  
MARY SKINNER  
JIM CLEMENTS